

The Tale of Mrs. Tiggy-Winkle

Beatrix Potter

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Title: The Tale of Mrs. Tiggy-Winkle

Author: Beatrix Potter

Release Date: April 21, 2004 [EBook #12103]

Language: English

Character set encoding: ASCII

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Produced by Kathie Sanchez, Lauren Rouse, Marie Rouse, Kathy Rouse, Michael Sanchez, and Matthew Sanchez

THE TALE OF
MRS. TIGGY-WINKLE

BY
BEATRIX POTTER

Author of
"The Tale of Peter Rabbit", &c.

1905

For

THE REAL LITTLE LUCIE
OF NEWLANDS

ONCE upon a time there
was a little girl called
Lucie, who lived at a farm
called Little-town. She was
a good little girl--only she
was always losing her pocket-
handkerchiefs!

One day little Lucie came
into the farm-yard crying--
oh, she did cry so! "I've lost
my pocket-handkin! Three
handkins and a pinny! Have
you seen them, Tabby Kitten?"

THE Kitten went on washing
her white paws; so
Lucie asked a speckled hen--

"Sally Henny-penny, have
you found three pocket-handkins?"

But the speckled hen ran
into a barn, clucking--

"I go barefoot, barefoot,
barefoot!"

AND then Lucie asked Cock
Robin sitting on a twig.

Cock Robin looked sideways
at Lucie with his bright black
eye, and he flew over a stile
and away.

Lucie climbed upon the stile
and looked up at the hill behind
Little-town--a hill that goes
up-up--into the clouds as
though it had no top!

And a great way up the hillside
she thought she saw some
white things spread upon the
grass.

LUCIE scrambled up the
hill as fast as her stout
legs would carry her; she ran
along a steep path-way--up
and up--until Little-town was
right away down below--she
could have dropped a pebble
down the chimney!

PRESENTLY she came to
a spring, bubbling out
from the hill-side.

Some one had stood a tin can upon a stone to catch the water--but the water was already running over, for the can was no bigger than an egg-cup! And where the sand upon the path was wet--there were foot-marks of a very small person.

Lucie ran on, and on.

THE path ended under a big rock. The grass was short and green, and there were clothes-props cut from bracken stems, with lines of plaited rushes, and a heap of tiny clothes pins--but no pocket-handkerchiefs!

But there was something else--a door! straight into the hill; and inside it some one was singing--

"Lily-white and clean, oh!
With little frills between, oh!
Smooth and hot--red rusty spot
Never here be seen, oh!"

LUCIE, knocked--once--twice, and interrupted the song. A little frightened voice called out "Who's that?"

Lucie opened the door: and what do you think there was inside the hill?--a nice clean kitchen with a flagged floor and wooden beams--just like any other farm kitchen. Only the ceiling was so low that Lucie's head nearly touched it; and the pots and pans were small, and so was everything there.

THERE was a nice hot singey smell; and at the table, with an iron in her hand stood a very stout short person staring anxiously at Lucie.

Her print gown was tucked up, and she was wearing a large apron over her striped petticoat. Her little black

nose went sniffle, sniffle, snuffle,
and her eyes went twinkle,
twinkle; and underneath her
cap--where Lucie had yellow
curls--that little person had
PRICKLES!

"Who are you?" said
Lucie. "Have you
seen my pocket-handkins?"
The little person made a
bob-curtsey--"Oh, yes, if you
please'm; my name is Mrs.
Tiggy-winkle; oh, yes if you
please'm, I'm an excellent
clear-starcher!" And she took
something out of a clothes-
basket, and spread it on the
ironing-blanket.

"What's that thing?"
said Lucie--"that's
not by pocket-handkin?"
"Oh no, if you please'm;
that's a little scarlet waist-coat
belonging to Cock Robin!"
And she ironed it and folded
it, and put it on one side.

Then she took something
else off a clothes-horse--
"That isn't my pinny?" said Lucie.
"Oh no, if you please'm;
that's a damask table-cloth
belonging to Jenny Wren;
look how it's stained with
currant wine! It's very bad
to wash!" said Mrs. Tiggy-winkle.

MRS. TIGGY-WINKLE'S
nose went sniffle, sniffle,
snuffle, and her eyes went
twinkle, twinkle; and she
fetched another hot iron from
the fire.

"THERE'S one of my
pocket-handkins!" cried
Lucie--"and there's my pinny!"
Mrs. Tiggy-winkle ironed it,
and goffered it, and shook out
the frills.

"Oh that is lovely!" said
Lucie.

"AND what are those long
yellow things with fingers
like gloves?"

"Oh, that's a pair of stockings belonging to Sally Henny-penny --look how she's worn the heels out with scratching in the yard! She'll very soon go barefoot!" said Mrs. Tiggy-winkle.

"WHY, there's another handkersniff--but it isn't mine; it's red?"
"Oh no, if you please'm; that one belongs to old Mrs. Rabbit; and it did so smell of onions! I've had to wash it separately, I can't get out the smell."

"There's another one of mine," said Lucie.

"WHAT are those funny little white things?"
"That's a pair of mittens belonging to Tabby Kitten; I only have to iron them; she washes then herself."
"There's my last pocket-handkin!" said Lucie.

"AND what are you dipping into the basin of starch?"
"They're little dicky shirt-fronts belonging to Tom Tits-mouse --most terrible particular!" said Mrs. Tiddy-winkle.
"Now I've finished my ironing; I'm going to air some clothes."

"WHAT are these dear soft fluffy things?" said Lucie.
"Oh those are woolly coats belonging to the little lambs at Skelghyl."

"Will their jackets take-off?" asked Lucie.

"Oh yes, if you please'm; look at the sheep-mark on the shoulder. And here's one marked for Gatesgarth, and three that come from Little-town. They're always marked at washing!" said Mrs. Tiggy-winkle.

AND she hung up all sorts and sizes of clothes--small brown coats of mice;

and one velvety black mole-skin waist coat; and a red tail-coat with no tail belonging to Squirrel Nutkin; and a very much shrunk jacket belonging to Peter Rabbit; and a petticoat, not marked, that had gone lost in the washing --and at last the basket was empty!

THEN Mrs. Tiggy-winkle made tea--a cup for herself and a cup for Lucie. They sat before a fire on a bench and looked sideways at one another.

Mrs. Tiggy-winkle's hand, holding the tea-cup, was very very brown, and very very wrinkly with the soap suds; and all through her gown and her cap, there were hair-pins sticking wrong end out; so that Lucie didn't like to sit to near her.

WHEN they had finished tea, they tied up the clothes in bundles; and Lucie's pocket-handkerchiefs were folded up inside her clean pinny, and fastened with a silver safety-pin.

And then they made up the fire with turf, and came out and locked the door, and hid the key under the door-sill.

THEN away down the hill trotted Lucie and Mrs. Tiggy-winkle and the bundles of clothes!

All the way down the path little animals came out of the fern to meet them; the very first that they met was Peter Rabbit and Benjamin Bunny!

AND she gave them their Nice clean clothes; and all the little animals and birds were so very much obliged to dear Mrs. Tiggy-winkle.

SO that at the bottom of the

hill when they came to
the stile, there was nothing
left to carry except Lucie's
one little bundle.

Lucie scrambled up the
stile with the bundle in
her hand; and then she turned
to say, "Good-Night," and to
thank the washer-woman--
But what a very odd thing!
Mrs. Tiggy-Winkle had not
waited either for thanks or for
the washing bill!
She was running running
running up the hill--and
Where was her white frilled
cap? and her shawl? and her
gown--and her petticoat?

AND how small she had
grown--and how brown
--and covered with prickles!
Why! Mrs. Tiggy-winkle
was nothing but a hedgehog.

* * * * *

(Now some people say that little
Lucie had been asleep upon the stile--
but then how could she have found
three clean pocket-handkins and a pinny,
pinned with a silver safety pin?
And besides--I have seen that door
into the back of the hill called Cat
Bells--and besides I am very well
acquainted with dear Mrs. Tiggy-winkle!)

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